KOHLER OF KOHLER News

SPECIAL WADE HOUSE ISSUE

WADE HOUSE.

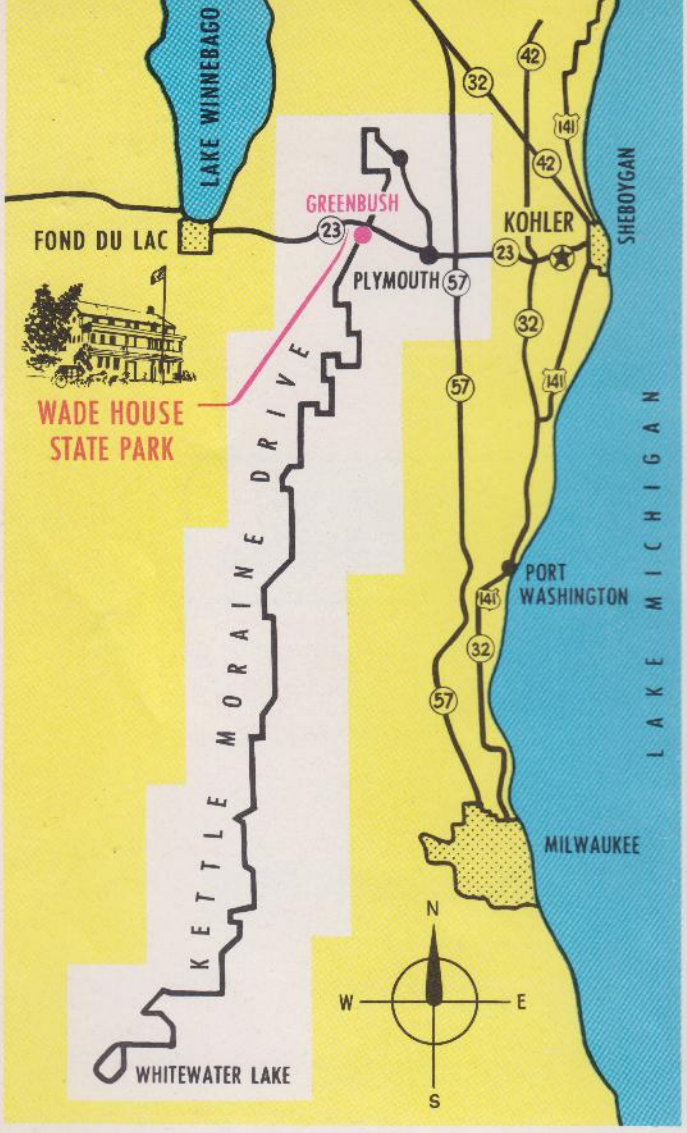
One of Wisconsin's First Stagecoach Inns

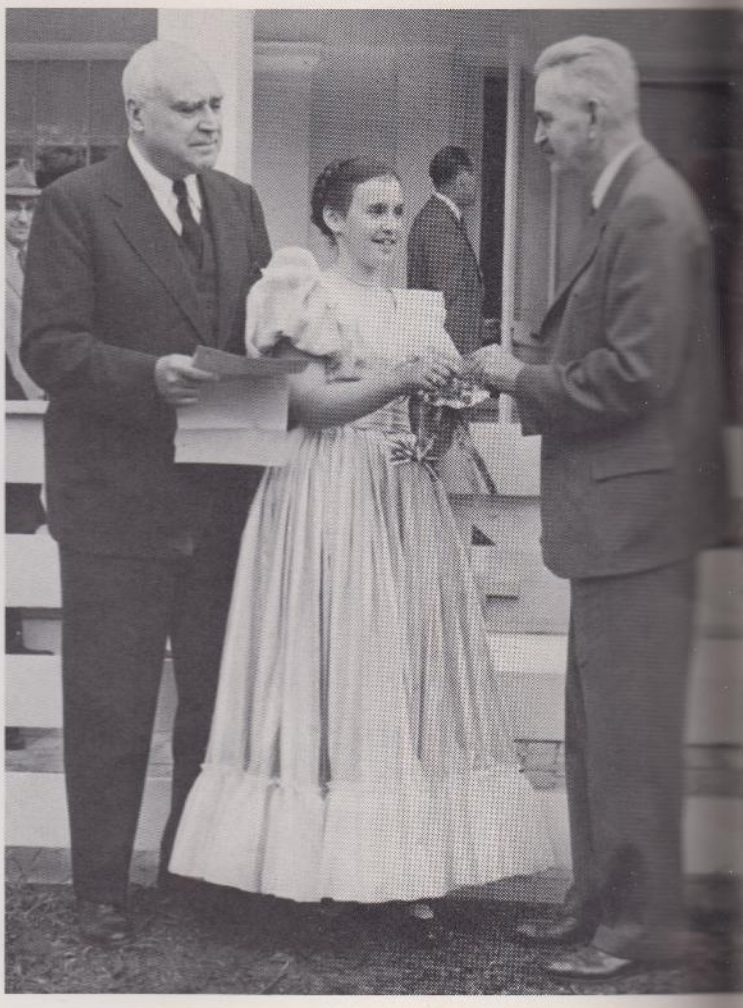
Its Preservation and Restoration

Greenbush, Wisconsin

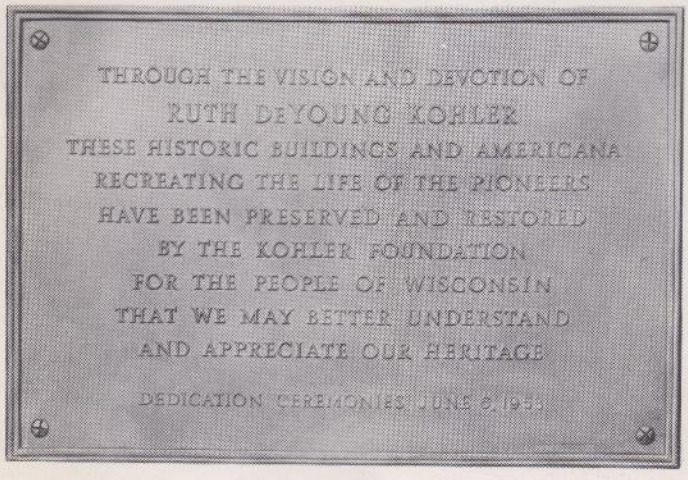
Copyright, 1957, Kohler Co., Kohler, Wisconsin

Volume 41 · Special Issue · October, 1957





Restored buildings and grounds of beautiful Old Wade House State Park were formally conveyed to state by Herbert V. Kohler, chairman of the Kohler Foundation. Ruth De Young Kohler II, whose mother planned and directed the restoration, presents key to Dr. William McKern of State Historical Society.


THROUGH THE VISION AND DEVOTION OF
RUTH DEYOUNG KOHLER
THESE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND AMERICANA
RECREATING THE LIFE OF THE PIONEERS
HAVE BEEN PRESERVED AND RESTORED
BY THE KOHLER FOUNDATION
FOR THE PEOPLE OF WISCONSIN
THAT WE MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND
AND APPRECIATE OUR HERITAGE
DEDICATION CEREMONIES JUNE 6, 1955

Memorial plaque recently placed in Wade House, century-old stagecoach inn, honors Ruth De Young Kohler (Mrs. Herbert V.) for preserving this heritage of America's frontier at Greenbush.

Poet Carl Sandburg, a speaker at dedication of state park, said of America's pioneers, or "wayshewers"—"Their lessons are worth our seeing and remembering. They ought not to be forgotten . . ."

Once more a popular stopping place, Old Wade House has been restored to the completeness of mid-nineteenth century when inn was a frontier outpost on Sheboygan-to-Fond du Lac plank road.

Old Wade House Is Receiving Guests Again

"My Name is Sandburg," the famous white-maned poet and biographer of Lincoln introduced himself in earnest tones. ". . . I'm really a 'come-lately' here."

With only a wax taper to light the way through the summer night, Sandburg moved from one to another of the good-sized rooms of Old Wade House.

The storied and famous stagecoach inn, oldest such hostel in the state, is the central and dominating structure in the group of restored frontier buildings in Old Wade House State Park at Greenbush, Wisconsin.

It was Carl Sandburg's first

Butternut House, another of park's restored structures and known to pioneer settlers as the "mansion" of Greenbush, is charming home distinguished by its cupola and pillared veranda.

Her Purpose:

". . . to preserve something

of the spirit and

fortitude which made

America great . . ."

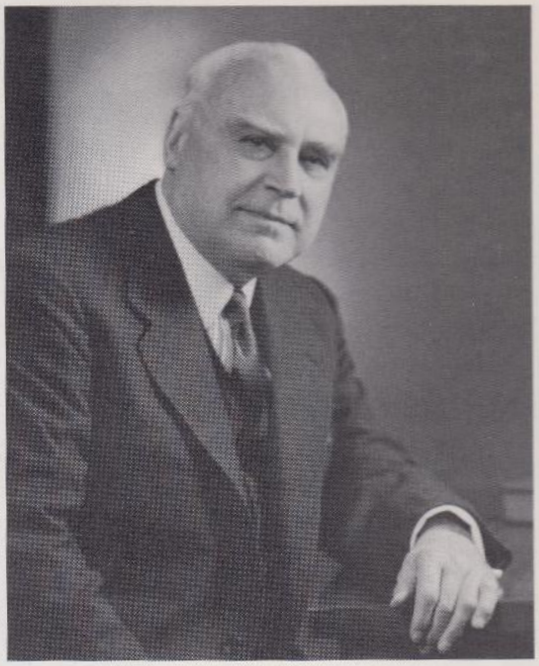
Ruth De Young Kohler

visit to the reconstructed inn, now more than a century old.

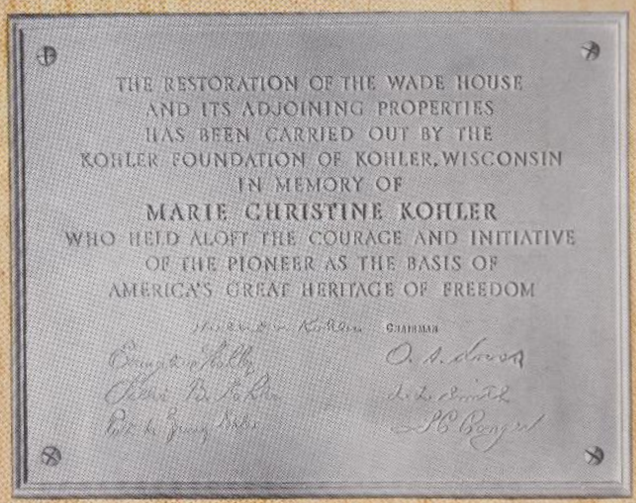
This, in spite of the lateness of the hour, was his way of getting acquainted with the gleaming buildings which are nearly as old as Wisconsin's statehood, and which, with startling realism, preserve the frontier spirit and customs of Wisconsin's pioneers of the mid-nineteenth century.

White-pillared Wade House, as well as the other well-ordered buildings of this historic landmark, were restored to their original grace and beauty and furnished under the personal direction of the late Ruth De Young Kohler (Mrs. Herbert V.). Mrs. Kohler devoted three unselfishly busy years to her self-assigned task of planning and supervising the big project.

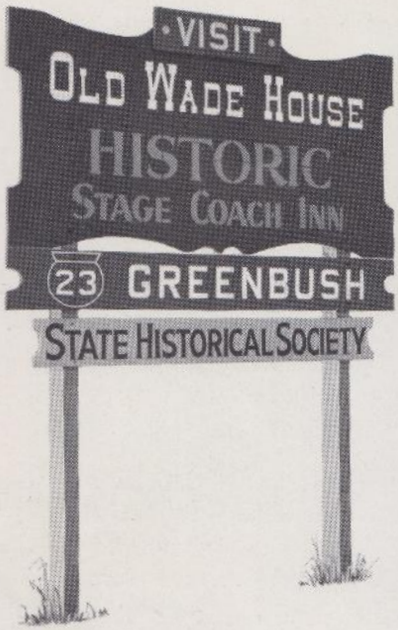
By the light of the candle's flickering flame, the figures that give human meaning to the rooms of the old inn seemed about to respond to the "come-lately" visitor's persistent questioning. The mannequins, in authentic costumes of a period when Wade House was crowded by wilderness, helped to inspire Sandburg's comments.



In his dedication address on June 6th, 1953, Herbert V. Kohler stated: "Significant things of history embrace all the means by which man has learned to deal with his environment and to live with his fellow men . . ."


THE RESTORATION OF THE WADE HOUSE
AND ITS ADJOINING PROPERTIES
HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT BY THE
KOHLER FOUNDATION OF KOHLER, WISCONSIN
IN MEMORY OF
MARIE CHRISTINE KOHLER
WHO HELD ALOFT THE COURAGE AND INITIATIVE
OF THE PIONEER AS THE BASIS OF
AMERICA'S GREAT HERITAGE OF FREEDOM

It was the wish of Marie Christine Kohler that colorful Wade House be preserved. Ambitious three-year project was carried out by Ruth Kohler as a memorial to her late sister-in-law.



Visited now by hundreds of people daily, Wade House displays to advantage the simplicity of architecture and spaciousness that made it famous in early days of Wisconsin's statehood.

A companion structure is Butternut House, graceful home Charles Robinson, carpenter, built in 1850's for himself and his wife Julia, daughter of Sylvanus and Betsy Wade.

Color photographs of the buildings and grounds of Old Wade House State Park by Torkel Korling, of Chicago, world-renowned photographer. Color photographs of flora native to the Kettle Moraine are by Martin Hollander and Charles Pagnucco, of the Kohler organization, who have made a hobby of nature photography. Wood panels reproduced in this issue are of butternut native to Sheboygan County.

"My name is Sandburg," the poet urged again in the manner of one making a pilgrimage.

"Tell me, if you will, what you have been thinking about? You, with your stomachs full of partridge and venison."

With twinkling eye and a friendly smile, the author here and there even supplied an answer to his own probing questions.

"The school tax, perhaps? Has that been filling your thoughts?

"Or, more likely, the new school teacher?

"Or the debates that gangling, serious-faced lawyer from Springfield has been having around the country with Steve Douglas?"

Then, with the taper casting odd shadows on the walls of the third floor ballroom of Wade House, the soliloquy shifted from political matters to lighter things —the dancing and the music that were popular in the pre-Civil War period.

In the ballroom the poet stopped beside the square Mendelssohn piano and addressed himself to the silent ladies gathered there.

Carl Sandburg's visit to the imposing stagecoach inn was made on the eve of the June 6, 1953 conveyance of Old Wade House State Park as a gift from the Kohler Foundation, Inc., to the people of Wisconsin. On that occasion the restored buildings and grounds were presented to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Conservation Department.

Speaking at the dedication, Sandburg observed:

"It is an outstanding restoration. There is nothing to compare with it in the Middle West. Wade House really typifies the sweat, blood and tears that went into the making of America."

Paying an earnest tribute to the leadership and painstaking work contributed by Mrs. Kohler in carrying out the restoration project, Sandburg said:

"After we are all vanished, the young and the old of this hour, other generations will come here and say: 'How lovely.'

" 'How thoughtful it was of these people away back there to keep that house as it was when it was a living thing.' "

Speaking then of pioneers, the poet-philosopher offered a quotation from his book, "Remembrance Rock:"*

" 'When we say a patriot is one who loves his country, what kind of love do we mean? A love we can throw on a scale and see how much it weighs? A love we can take apart to see how it ticks? . . . These are questions. They are as old as the time of man. And the answers to them we know in part.

" 'For we know when a nation goes down and never comes back, when a society or a civilization perishes, one condition may always be found. They forgot where they came from. They lost sight of what brought them along. The hard beginnings were forgotten and the struggles farther along. They became satisfied with themselves . . .' "

*Copyright 1948 by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

Restoration began with Wade House, which was in a state of decay when Mrs. Kohler undertook project in 1950.

Butternut House had lost much of original beauty through neglect and removal of porch, roof and distinctive cupola.

Wade House, begun in 1847 and finished in 1851, was operated as an inn by Sylvanus Wade and his wife, the former Betsy Oakley, and members of their family for most of a century. It was also known to its pioneer clientele as the "Half-Way House."

Sylvanus and Betsy Wade, "wayshewers."

Following an Indian trail, Wades and their nine children arrived April 28, 1844 in covered wagon at cabin Wade built beside the Mullett while his family waited at Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin Territory. Born at North Adams, Massachusetts, Wade had married Betsy Oakley in Pennsylvania, and in 1836 they went by wagon to Joliet, Illinois. Inn proprietor was also blacksmith, justice of peace, town chairman and first postmaster.

Its location was important. It was mid-way between the port of Sheboygan and Fond du Lac on the busy but rough plank road joining the two towns.

The road threaded through what seemed to the weary travelers in the four-horse Concord or Troy stagecoaches, to be endless miles of forest wilderness.

The "all-weather" plank road that made Wade House the important way station on a bouncing day-long drive has long since given way to a modern concrete highway, over which automobiles now make the trip to Greenbush from either city in a matter of a few minutes.

Located at the north gateway of the beauteous Kettle Moraine State Forest area and alongside Highway 23, Old Wade House State Park embraces four and one-half acres of landscaped and carefully planted grounds.

Plantings in state park are trees and shrubs that grew in the wilderness interior of Sheboygan county.

Beauty of side yard of Old Wade House is enhanced by lawns and native plantings. Smokehouse is blackened by long exposure to smoke and curing of meats.

"In the quiet of the village, in the rural charm of trees and water and greensward," Mrs. Kohler had noted, "there is revived something of the spirit and enterprise that is every American's heritage . . ."

Three principal historic buildings are situated on this site in the hills. They are Wade House, Butternut House and the blacksmith shop. The latter is a replica of the blacksmith shop Sylvanus Wade built of rough hewn white pine about the time the first Sheboygan-to-Fond du Lac stage route, the old dirt Territorial Road, was completed in 1845.

There are also the sturdy and attractive sugaring cabin, the smoke house and a modern building for the reception of visitors.

Between the inn and the restored blacksmith shop is the Mullett River, a busily rippling stream which visitors cross on a foot bridge to visit the tree-shaded smithy.

Picturesque ridges and basins of the extensive Kettle Moraine State Forest ring Greenbush and Old Wade House State Park, making the area a jewel of natural attractiveness.

The beautifully rugged topography of the Kettle Moraine was created ages ago by the meeting of two lobes of a great glacial ice sheet and extends for more than 100 miles, north to south.

Interspersed by woodlands, lakes and ponds, the Kettle Moraine is a garden spot for camping, fishing, hiking, bathing, picnicking and other outdoor activities. Of the many regions of natural charm in Eastern Wisconsin, the Kettle Moraine forest area, a continuing development of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, is one of the most distinctive and inviting.

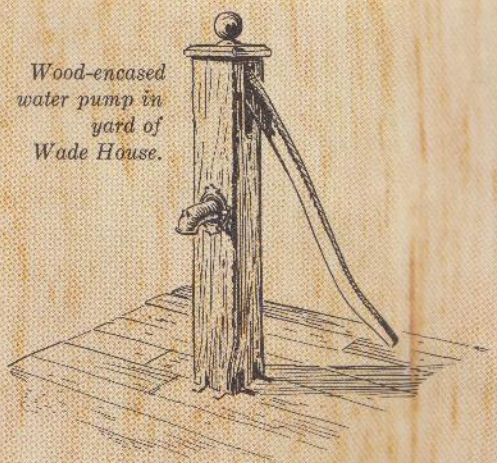
Passing through Greenbush, an

Beside Mullett River is the park's restored blacksmith shop at location of first smithy.

Log sugaring cabin is equipped to make sugar and syrup for inn table. Area is noted for its maples, and "sugaring" still thrives in the Kettle Moraine countryside.

Hand-shaped white pine woodwork adds grace to inn reception hall.

Wood-encased water pump in yard of Wade House.



Cheerful corner of front parlor at Wade House shows the beauty of restored furniture which includes an old Kimball organ.

automobile drive traverses the Kettle Moraine from a point near the Illinois line to Elkhart Lake and the Sheboygan Marsh, in upper Sheboygan county, giving access to this extensive domain of forests, sparkling lakes and abundant wild life.

Travelers are coming to Wade House now to tour buildings and grounds. They find the inn staffed, furnished and as well equipped as it was in the period of its greatest popularity. Everything concerning its restoration has been completed with careful attention to detail.

Dining tables are set for dinner. Kitchen and summer kitchen are filled with the equipment which was needed for preparation of the inn's meals on a busy day and night schedule.

There are comfortable parlors, the taproom, and neat bedrooms.

Much of the original furniture, hand made on the premises, is now in the rooms of Wade House.

Mannequins clothed in original garments out of Wisconsin's frontier past give vivid meaning to the room settings and the household duties that were performed in the inn.

From the broad front porch or through the drawn glass window panes, the visitor looks out on the quiet landscaped acres planted with native bushes and shrubs that abounded when dusty travelers came to the wilderness inn by wagon, coach or horseback.

Now open daily in season to the public, Old Wade House State Park is attracting a steady flow of visitors, a big proportion of whom are school children.

Inn's tap room was completely restored and front and back bars were carefully rebuilt from remnants of originals.

Many visitors register from other states, and some from foreign countries. There has been an increasing interest in Wade House since its opening. Through June of 1957, 133,376 persons had toured the historic buildings.

Trained guides in costumes of the mid-nineteenth century show the visitors through Wade House and the other park buildings and explain the restoration in all its details. Visitors are welcome starting at 9 a.m. daily during the season, May 1 to November 1.

The restoration project was undertaken and completed by Mrs. Kohler as a living memorial to Marie Christine Kohler, who herself had long been interested in preserving the famous Wade House as a meaningful landmark of history, the history of early Wisconsin and frontier America.

Begun in 1950 with the purchase of the inn, the first of five pieces of property acquired for the purpose, the project was nearly completed, except for its formal conveyance to the state, when Mrs. Kohler passed away on March 7, 1953, at the age of forty-six, in her home in the Village of Kohler.

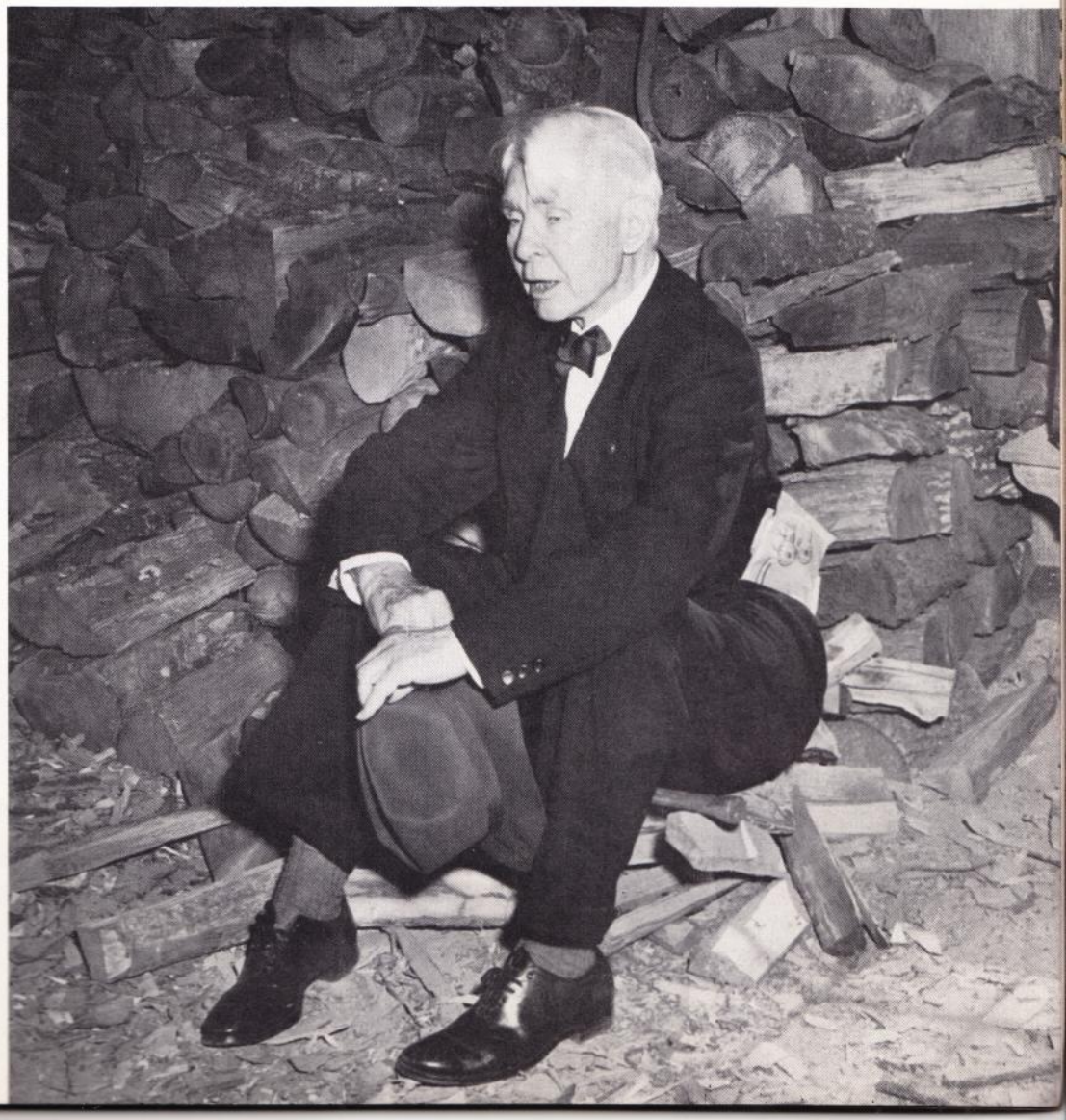
However, she had outlined in advance her plans for the details still to be finished. She had made the arrangements with a thoroughness that was characteristic of all her undertakings, and the project was finished and ready for the dedication on the June 6 date she had established.

The Kohler Foundation, a nonprofit corporation which made the Wade House undertaking possible, received the original fund from Marie Kohler's estate. That fund was increased by gifts made by the Misses Evangeline Kohler, Lillie Babette Kohler, and by contributions by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert V. Kohler.

An early problem, that of arranging for the future operation and maintenance of the property after the restoration was com-

Maple Tree

"Recalling my own boyhood," Carl Sandburg observed at the dedication, "I am aware of the woodshed's importance in the family scheme. Many lessons were impressed on me there."

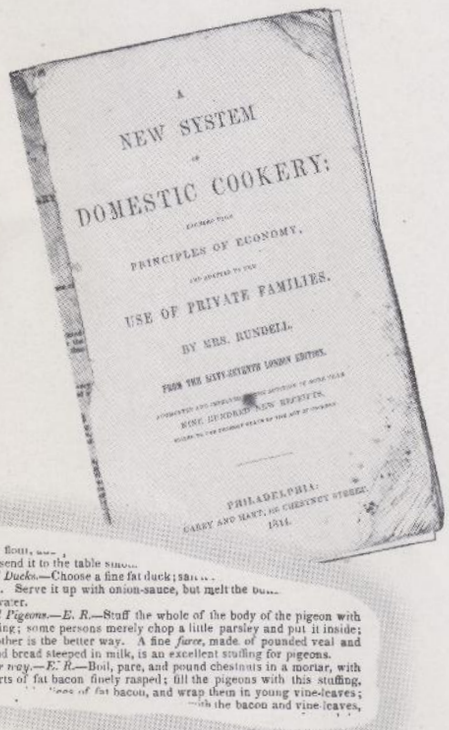


pleted, had been solved by Mrs. Kohler, herself a director of the Kohler Foundation and a curator of the State Historical Society.

In 1950, she proposed that the Society, in conjunction with the Conservation Department, operate and maintain the buildings and park grounds as an extension of the Society's expanding historic sites program. Both organizations agreed to her proposal. A formal arrangement was made with the Kohler Foundation under which the restoration was to be carried out according to her plans, whereupon the property would be conveyed to the state.

In his presentation of the restored buildings and land at the dedication, Herbert V. Kohler, chairman of the Foundation, emphasized the far-reaching influence America's frontier has exerted upon the nation's culture and growth.

Enduring charm of Wade House design is evident in this view of side porch adjoining the inn's kitchen.


A
NEW SYSTEM
OF
DOMESTIC COOKERY;
PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMY,
USE OF PRIVATE FAMILIES.
BY MRS. RUNDELL.
PHILADELPHIA:
1844.

The cooks relied on Mrs. Rundell's "Domestic Cookery," published in 1844.

"These buildings and the collections they contain," he stated, "will be viewed in a variety of lights, depending upon the interests of the individual—in the artistic—in the handicrafts—in the way of life of our forebears—or in tracing the course of development from those early days to our own time.

"These collections suggest many of the problems and hardships of a century ago, the ingenuity with which the tasks of life were met, the craving for beauty, and the attention given by pioneers in a rough country to the amenities of life.

"Looking deeper," he continued, "they are the stuff of serious history.

"There was a time, I believe, when the view was quite prevalent that the important things in history were the wars and great political changes, the doings of kings and statesmen and military men.

"Historians appear now to be agreed that the significant things . . . embrace all the means by which man has learned to deal with his environment and to live with his fellow men.

"Perhaps nowhere did there develop an earlier or clearer understanding of the historical sig-

nificance of the American frontier than here in Wisconsin. Frederick Jackson Turner began his great work at the University of Wisconsin, creating a sensation among historical scholars. He was followed by numerous others in the study of social life of the pioneers.

"Frederic L. Paxson, who was for some years a member of the history faculty at the university, declared that 'the frontier with its continuous influence is the most American thing in America.'

"Paxson added, with reference to the ending of the frontier as a physical fact, that we may 'lose the advantage of a fresh continent, but we shall still possess and be shaped by a unique heritage.'" Mr. Kohler continued:

"This historical site and museum typifies that heritage and can help to make it real to us. That is why this restoration has seemed worth doing.

"This is no adventure in the merely quaint and curious. The purpose, in Mrs. Kohler's words, has been 'to preserve something of the spirit and fortitude which made America great—to underscore the honest enterprise of the free individual.'"

Bloodroot

The Restoration

Problems by the score, many of them entirely unexpected, arose as the restoration of Wade House progressed under the patient direction of Ruth De Young Kohler.

Her consuming interest in history—particularly in the social history of this great segment of the United States frontier—contributed immeasurably to the completeness and beauty of the Greenbush project.

In carrying out this work, her conviction was that "there can be no real understanding of the present unless one has a thorough knowledge of the past."

In an address before the American Association of Museums on May 30, 1952, when she was honored for the Wade House restoration, Mrs. Kohler discussed the lessons history teaches in relation to citizenship and the responsibilities of the individual. She explained:

". . . May I underline the belief that each of us is a trustee of the past—that we have the important task of living up to our inheritance and adding something to it.

"Let us always remember that there was a time in this country when even a whole day of life was not taken for granted; much less water, shelter, and a safe night's sleep. Now by reason of this uniquely bountiful heritage, we take for granted—too much. We assume, we expect, we insist. Nowhere else in the world is this possible.

Antique melodeon in Butternut House living room.

"It is not to guarantee us ice cream and television that women bore children under Indian attack—that they were partners in the great pioneering sweep to the West.

". . . It is perhaps good for us to remember what our simple right to vote cost other human beings. Perhaps they had no thought for us; they were concerned with making *their* America. But what they made is what we have.

"To take this heritage unthinkingly for granted is a first step to losing it.

"Tomorrow can be kept bright and shining, I firmly believe, only through the same faith and courage, the hard work and common sense, the positive Americanism we build into today."

Bed of Violets

Historical Society Operates Park

General responsibility for the buildings and historic displays of Old Wade House State Park rests with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, nationally known institution of historical research and the trustee of the state.

Grounds and exteriors are in the care of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, which is developing the Kettle Moraine State Forest area.

Founded in 1848, the State Historical Society has its headquarters at Madison in the Society's building that also houses its famous library and museum.

An activity that is attracting widespread interest is the organization's Historic Sites program.

Besides Old Wade House, the Society operates the Villa Louis Mansion at Prairie du Chien, built in 1843 by Col. Hercules Dousman. Another is Stonefield, the State Farm and Craft Museum at Cassville.

It was this imaginative interest and dedication to a well-chosen purpose that Mrs. Kohler brought to the rehabilitation of old Wade House.

In her words, Wade House was "one of the significant landmarks in the State of Wisconsin."

The inn had likewise drawn the studied attention of the American Historic Buildings Survey, which had singled it out as a building "that should be preserved."

Work on the restoration of the inn began in the summer of 1950. It soon became apparent that Butternut House, the "mansion" built on a knoll just to the west of the inn by Charles H. Robinson, son-in-law of Sylvanus and Betsy Wade, as well as Wade's old blacksmith shop, were sufficiently meaningful for inclusion in the park project.

The additional property was acquired and the project's scope broadened.

Upstream a stone's throw on the Mullett are the remnants of the stone and earth dam where once stood a grist mill and Robinson's busy saw mill. In the water-powered mill the white pine, butternut, ash and basswood logs felled at the forest's edge were sawed and shaped for the building of Wade House, Butternut House and other structures in the growing hamlet of Greenbush.

Because of his unusual skill as a designer as well as a carpenter, Charles Robinson's influence in the early development of Greenbush is believed to have been significant.

Robinson designed and built his home, graceful Butternut House. There is evidence that he designed and helped build Wade House and one or two other struc-

North of the inn and across the Mullett is the restored blacksmith shop where Sylvanus Wade worked at his anvil and forge.

Filled with the tools of Wade's day, the smithy typifies early industry in Wisconsin.

Cowhide bellows and battered forge can produce a glowing fire for shaping a horse shoe.

Part of the equipment is an ox sling to lift the animal for shoeing. It was needed because the ox cannot stand on three legs.

tures, including the Greenbush Methodist Church, for their proportions and architecture are strikingly similar.

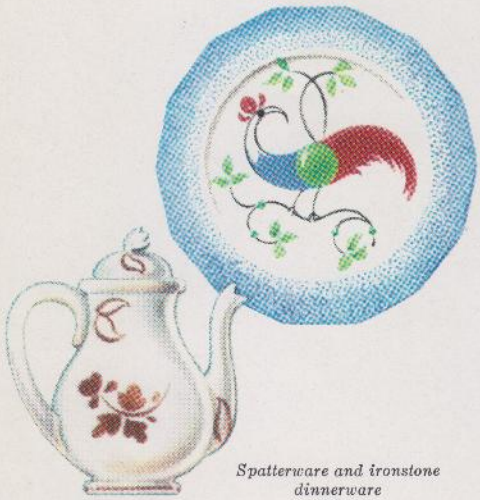
Once an imposing building famous far and wide for its spaciousness and simple, attractive lines, the old inn by 1950 had become a weary, weather-stained hulk that sagged with rotting support beams on a crumbling foundation of field stone and lime mortar.

An eight-inch sag in the main ridge of Wade House was an evidence of severe structural troubles. Many original bearing timbers had rotted through, and some had been shored up with fresh post supports. The result was that the building was uneven to the extent that walls had buckled, the plaster was falling and doors failed to close.

Sheet tin had been nailed over the attractive cedar shakes that once covered the roof of Wade House. The original front porch at some time had been replaced by a concrete one that changed the building's lines. Partitions had been shifted or removed, modifying several original rooms.

Summer kitchen and woodshed walls had rotted through.

Butternut House, built in the middle 1850's and taking its name from the butternut lumber used for its construction, was in a similar state of disrepair.



Spatterware and ironstone dinnerware

The porch of Butternut House, a part of the home's original beauty, had been removed and the pillars had been cut off. Its distinctive cupola was gone—as was the original roof—and the ridge line sagged badly.

In the course of the restoration, the foundations of both buildings were rebuilt from bottom up, and the hand-hewn oak timbers that could not be saved were replaced. All the supports were coated with a preservative.

With the supports corrected and in proper alignment, the inn returned to level, the walls straightened and doors and windows once again could be opened and closed.

Walls throughout both buildings were replastered with the smooth white plaster of the period after the original partitions, where they had been removed or changed, were put back as when the buildings were new.

Cedar shakes, now unavailable hereabouts, were brought from British Columbia to replace the patchwork roof coverings.

The porches were repaired and restored. Doors and windows were rebuilt by hand. Where window panes had to be replaced, drawn glass, with its classic imperfections, was used to match the original glass.

Completeness of inn furnishings obtains in summer kitchen. Here are such valuable articles as Wade House original cook stove, rebuilt "inside" well and a cobbler's bench.

When butternut, now rare, was needed for interior repairs, some logs were found at a sawmill in nearby Sheboygan Falls and processed for replacement lumber.

In those instances where hardware had been damaged, it was replaced by hand-wrought pieces reproduced from originals still in use in the hostelry.

Layer upon layer of old paint and varnish were removed from the exquisite white pine and butternut woodwork to reveal once more its satin smooth, rich beauty and rare detail of craftsmanship.

Surrounding grounds were landscaped to achieve the authenticity of 100 years ago. The new plantings were the trees and shrubs common to the original wilderness landscape, including elms, sugar maples, butternuts, wild crabapples, hawthorns and high bush cranberries.

To carry out Mrs. Kohler's intention of portraying the customs and the way of life of people of that long-ago time, the restoration went far beyond the repair and rehabilitation of buildings and grounds.

As a result, the principal buildings are furnished as when stagecoaches and other vehicles arrived at the inn, bringing in a single day as many as 200 travelers—surveyors, military men, landseekers, fur traders, settlers and immigrants wanting food and lodging.

Wade House and Butternut House hold a treasure of antiques and heirlooms. The blacksmith shop, too, is equipped with the interesting tools of a century-old smithy, including forge and bellows and the almost forgotten equipment to shoe an ox or horse or to fit a wagon wheel tire.

George Washington vegetable dish

Wade House, with its front parlor for the ladies' use, its tap room with old-fashioned bar and back bar of warm butternut, and its large dining room, is quite as it was when Sylvanus Wade was the well-known blacksmith and

Wade family's white and tea leaf ironstone dinnerware and pea fowl pattern spatterware again grace inn's dining room. Doors to ladies' parlor are of butternut.

proprietor of the frontier inn.

Dining room tables are invitingly set with the Wades' original white ironstone dinnerware. In a pine cupboard and mounted on the wall are pieces of Betsy Wade's rare spatterware, of the pea fowl pattern, made in Staffordshire, England, and brought west by wagon from her New Milford, Pennsylvania home, after she was married to Sylvanus Wade.

Beyond the dining room are the kitchen and summer kitchen with their quaint furnishings, including pots hanging from the swinging crane in the kitchen fireplace, a low wood burning cook stove, a bread-mixing machine, an "inside" well and a charcoal-burning wood mangle.

Bedrooms and parlors, fully furnished, occupy the second floor. On the third is a good-sized ballroom, scene of many cotillions and community parties in days gone by. The third floor also includes six small bedrooms that once provided overnight quarters for stagecoach drivers.

Many of the inn's original furnishings, such as rope beds with corn-husk mattresses, gallery wash stands, dining and kitchen tables and chairs, horse hair settees and heating stoves, were at hand and were carefully repaired. Additional furnishings came from descendants of the Wade family and other individuals.

To complete her project, Mrs. Kohler found it necessary to search out and acquire many other early-day furnishings and garments.

A good number of the accessories, such as authentic costumes and pieces of furniture, are valued family heirlooms that were contributed by generous friends in many parts of the state.

In this category is the territorial bedroom to be seen on the second floor of Wade House. Complete with fireplace and mantel, it was displayed at the Wisconsin Centennial at Milwaukee in 1948, then later was presented for inclusion in Wade House by heirs of the estate of the late Jessie H. Buchanan, of Green Bay.

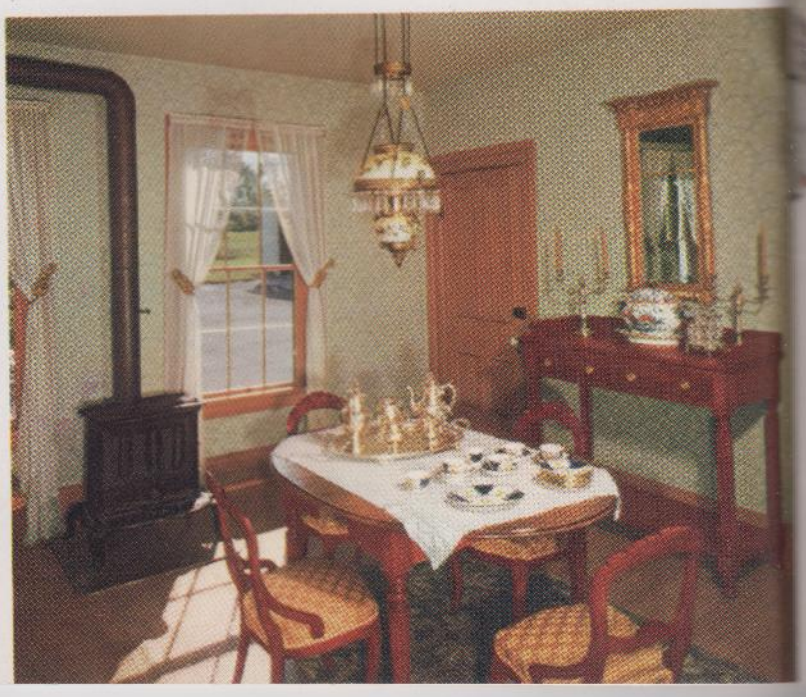
Other articles and services—almost too many to list—had to be located by inquiry and by persevering search that often took Mrs. Kohler on trips across the countryside. The object of such a search might have been a lamp of certain design and age, a hand woven coverlet of 1850, or a chair of exact specifications.

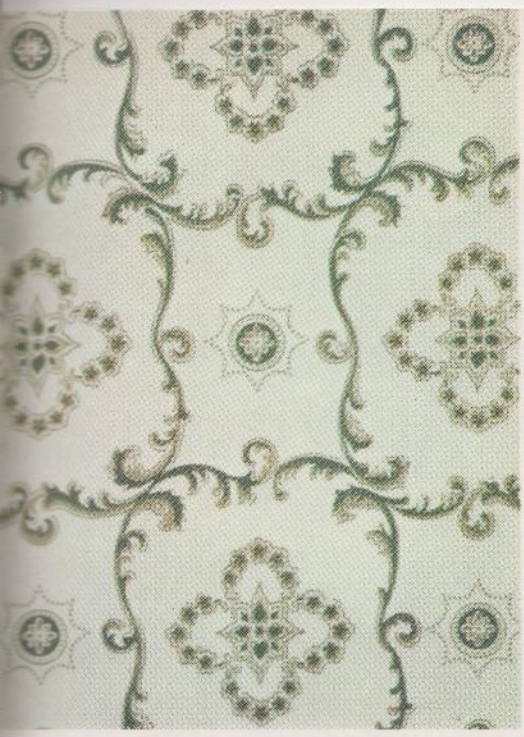
The completeness of the restoration stands as a tribute to her fine regard for historical authenticity and her desire to achieve perfection.

Typical of her acquisitions for Wade House is the wood burning stove, of unusual design, which stands in its accustomed place in the summer kitchen.

It was among the inn's first furnishings, but at some point it had been sold and removed. When the buildings were being

Over-size fireplace framed in white pine is an appealing feature of inn kitchen (left). Muzzle-loading rifles and powder horns, like spinning wheel, are original Wade House pieces. Butternut House dining room displays home's exquisite interior woodwork.





Green and ivory wallpaper in ladies' parlor.

Gray parlor wallpaper, copy of original 1842 design.

restored, Mrs. Kohler learned of the stove's whereabouts and purchased it so it could be returned to its place in Wade House.

Wallpapers which she obtained for the two buildings are documentary papers, and all hangings are of registered materials copied from museum samples.

In the "gray parlor" and adjoining bedroom of the second-floor suite of the Hollis Wades, son and daughter-in-law of Sylvanus, the wallpaper is a reproduction of a paper originally brought from Perth, Scotland, about 1842.

Original Garments Clothe Mannequins

Costumes displayed in the rooms of Wade House and Butternut House are original garments dating back as far as 100 years or more.

Clothed and posed in life-like attitudes of work or relaxation, the nineteen mannequins in the inn and two in Butternut House serve a double purpose. They display the authentic apparel of the frontier people, and they properly relate the buildings to the people who lived and worked in them when the red men of the Kettle Moraine far outnumbered the white settlers.

Miss Stella Harlos, of Layton Art School, Milwaukee, created the mannequins, which were costumed by the late Alberta Johnson Price of Oconomowoc.

An alternate set of costumes, consisting of a complete wardrobe of original wedding garments of the 1850's and 1860's, has been provided for display on the feminine figures in the inn's ballroom. More usually the mannequins are clothed in afternoon dresses of plaid silk, wool twill or striped taffeta.

Men's and women's garments shown at Wade House are both work and dress clothes of the era, including a notable collection of cotton fabrics—true pioneer cloth.

One authority has observed:

"The colors are rugged like the people who stopped at Wade House and like the proprietors and the cooks, ironers, seamstresses, and weavers who maintained the inn."

Rare and original garments, gifts to Mrs. Kohler, were added to the collection to show the full range of colors and fabrics that were the mode of the 1850's.

Garments for the collection were offered by residents of Wisconsin when they learned of her plan to depict people and their activities as well as the architecture of that early day.

Some of the costumes had been worn by persons prominent in early Wisconsin history.

Flowering Crab

Dress accessories—bags, parasols, combs, fans, and lace-edged handkerchiefs—are also originals of the period.

Pastel colors are few in the clothing fabrics. Instead, there is liberal use of such colors as putty, saffron, bittersweet, rust, mauve, apricot, forest green, red, indigo, and black. Men's clothes, for the most part, are black.

Patterns in the cotton, alpaca, mohair and silk materials favor the paisley types, with some stripes and plaids.

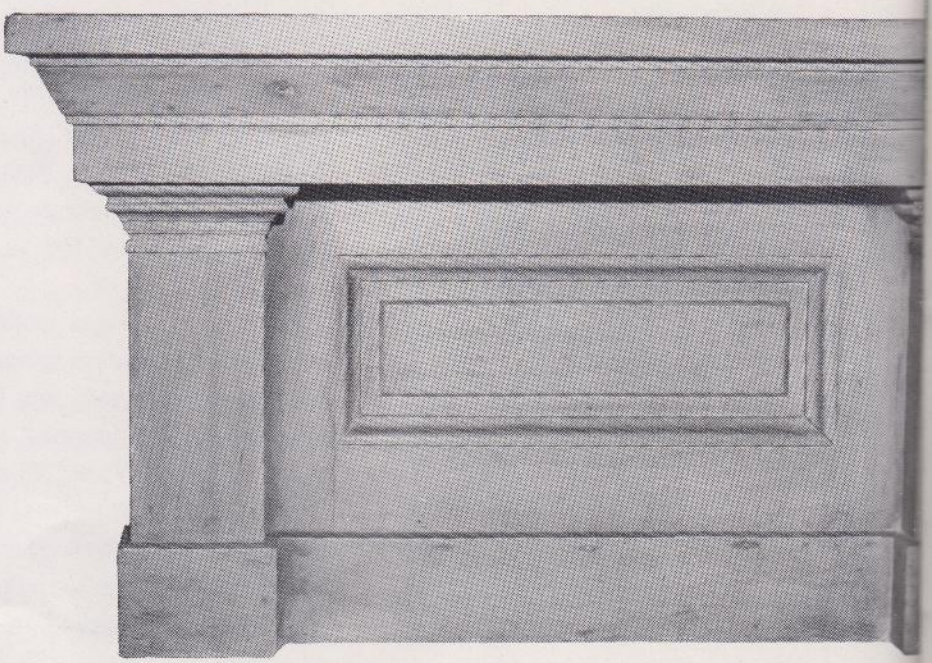
Visitors at Wade House will note such features as lined skirts and hems faced with crinoline and horse-hair braid.

Instead of concealing beneath dresses the choice laces and embroidery of undergarments, a selection is shown on an early-day clothes rack.

A startling realism is attained by the Wade House display of simulated human figures.

This method of using mannequins to display original costumes and depict human activities is regarded as an innovation in such exhibitions. It was successfully developed under the direction of Mrs. Kohler when she served as chairman of the

Skills of Specialists Restore Inn's Charm



CAREFUL CRAFTSMANSHIP and the special abilities contributed by many individuals made possible the restoration of old Wade House.

The work of rehabilitating buildings and grounds was directed by the following:

Richard Philipp, F.A.I.A., Milwaukee.

Leslie Quasius, president of Quasius Brothers, Inc., general contractors, Sheboygan.

Franz Lipp, landscape architect, Chicago.

In a combination office and mill at the site, Mrs. Kohler regularly conferred with these men and other principals engaged in the project.

Typical of the craftsmen who restored the buildings was Lester Kading, of Sheboygan, expert carpenter and builder who superintended construction.

His men were a corps of artisans chosen for their patience as well as special skills.

"What we had to do," Kading explained, "was find our way back to what the buildings were a century ago, using every bit of evidence we could discover."

The enthusiasm of Kading and his associates led to trips in search of special materials or such things as plans and photographs to guide them in making replacement articles.

A difficult phase of the restoration, Kading recalled, was having to replace the rotted timbers and supports beneath the buildings.

Experts that they are, Kading and Quasius speak with measured respect for the construction features of the original buildings.

One detail that intrigued them was the gracefully thin window sash made with hand tools. Small parts of the sash were fastened with solid wooden pegs. Others had firm mortise and tenon joints

Committee on Wisconsin Women for the Wisconsin Centennial held at Milwaukee in 1948.

The Centennial Women's Building exhibition of ten period rooms graphically and tastefully showed the evolution of the Wisconsin home and home living since territorial days. It was pronounced to be the finest such historical exhibit ever presented.

Its excellence and effectiveness as a feature of the state's Centennial brought national recognition for Mrs. Kohler and the members of her committee. As a result, she was given the Theodora Youmans Award for Distinguished Citizenship in 1948 by the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs and awards of merit by the State Historical Society and the American Association of State and Local History.

as did doors and some joists.

In all cases, replacement pieces were made just as the original builders had fashioned them.

Ornate trim, where missing, had to be made with hand tools —molding and grooving planes— such as those used a century ago.

One of Kading's special projects was outfitting the blacksmith shop, using forge and bellows to fashion much of its equipment. Working from an old photograph, Kading constructed the shop's ox sling at his carpenter's bench and the anvil.

One of the more exacting pieces of carpentry work was performed by Quasius' men in reproducing the tap room blinds, the delicate wooden louvres of which move up and down on vertical spindles.

The eight louvred interior blinds at each window in the inn's tap room all had to be meticulously made with hand tools in order to duplicate the design of the original blinds as shown by a few remnant pieces which served as patterns.

Rebuilding the inn's back bar and restoring the front bar, of which only a small section remained when the restoration project began, was another big undertaking, Kading recalls, for all of this work likewise had to be done with hand tools.

Staircase handrails for the inn were carved by hand from solid pieces of wood and were mounted directly on the walls without hardware.

Axe and plane were used to shape the park's flagpole.

"What She Was Exceeded All the Things She Did . . ."

What, it may be asked, were the capacities and attributes of Ruth De Young Kohler, the woman who planned and achieved this memorial that is one of Wisconsin's attractive state parks?

A gracious woman of brilliant mind and dynamic energy, Mrs. Kohler was a person of many talents. She was a devoted wife and mother, scholar, historian, accomplished newspaperwoman and leader in countless undertakings of public benefit.

Hand-made cherry chest from Wade collection was restored and placed in Butternut House bedroom.

She came to Kohler Village from Illinois after her marriage to Herbert V. Kohler on June 21, 1937.

To her career as wife and homemaker she dedicated herself unreservedly. Her first interest was always the welfare and comfort of her husband and their three children, Herbert V. Kohler, Jr., Ruth De Young Kohler II and Frederic Cornell Kohler.

Fellow members of the Kohler Woman's Club in a memorial resolution after her passing summed up her career as wife, mother and leading citizen of her community in these words:

". . . In her home, as in all she undertook, she dignified each task and duty by performing it conscientiously, competently, lovingly.

"Her friends and neighbors knew her as a devoted wife and mother. And while this private family life, in its very nature, was little seen of the world, it was perhaps her greatest achievement . . .

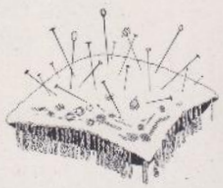
"As Woman's Club members, we are especially mindful of Mrs. Kohler's years of devoted work and brilliant leadership in this organization . . .

"We who knew her gracious personality, her active mind, her vital faith and her other outreaching qualities have something we can treasure but scarcely can put into words. What she was exceeded all the things she did . . ."

It was fitting that Ruth De Young Kohler chose to create and establish Wade House State Park as a memorial to Marie Christine Kohler, for there were parallels in the lives of these two women and the ideals which directed their manifold activities.

Between them there existed a feeling of admiration that arose during the years of their close association in family and community undertakings.

Both were persons of practical vision who had the singular ability to organize and to accomplish, directly and efficiently, whatever useful project or activity they might undertake.

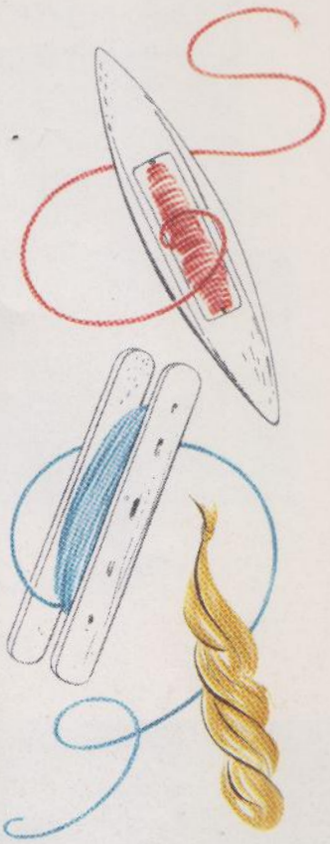


Marie Kohler, as well as Mrs. Kohler, was a student of the social history of America and of Wisconsin.

She had an appreciation for the human significance of famous Old Wade House and what it represents as a true remnant of the frontier phase of America's development. To her it was a symbol of what was required in faith, skills, perseverance and pure courage from the people of Sylvanus and Betsy Wade's time who went on to accomplish the winning of the West and the securing of an empire.

Marie Kohler had hoped to see the inn rehabilitated and preserved before it became damaged beyond repair. She had gone so far as to make tentative plans for its purchase and restoration. Had her health remained strong for a few years longer, it is possible that she might have undertaken the Wade House restoration project herself. She frequently discussed with friends how it might best be accomplished.

Marie Kohler's life-long interest in the history of her state is shown in the rich dignity of the Wisconsin Room, oak-paneled dining hall in the American Club at Kohler, which she designed and furnished.



Ancient loom acquired by Mrs. Kohler was restored to working order in second-floor room. Furnishings include hackle, wool winder and shuttles.

She planned the Wisconsin Room to reflect the state's social and economic beginnings. An interesting feature is a large tapestry map of Wisconsin that depicts the state's early industries and such historical events as the landing of Jean Nicolet, of France, at Green Bay in 1634. Another is a state flag tapestry. Both were executed by Lorentz Kleiser.

Also displayed in the Wisconsin Room are portrait drawings of twenty-four persons prominent in the state's development.

In Kohler Village, programs and activities pertaining to school and community life that had been developed and fostered by Marie Kohler were devotedly carried forward by Mrs. Kohler.

One such activity was the annual Better Homes Week program in the Village. It was first organized by Miss Kohler, in 1925, as a means of stimulating home improvement and beautification and a deeper appreciation of family life and the family arts. A pioneer in the work for Better

Well in summer kitchen of inn was rebuilt at its old location. Below are sugaring pail and tap from sugaring cabin.

Homes in America, Marie Kohler for several years served as the state chairman.

Following the pattern first set by Miss Kohler, the annual Better Homes Week in Kohler Village is a traditional observance that features an attractive Demonstration House—a house of personality—that draws many hundreds of visitors from far and near.

Devoting much of her time and abilities to activities which enhanced the educational and social life of her community, Miss Kohler herself organized the Kohler Woman's Club, which Ruth De Young Kohler later was to serve with great distinction as chairman for a period of eight years.

In 1919 Marie Kohler was instrumental in organizing the Kohler Girl Scouts, who have their well-appointed headquarters in the Waelderhaus, an inspiring center of community life she built in the Village in memory of her father, John Michael

Thoroughness of restoration is told in this view showing rare dolphin stove in green parlor and beauty of inn's hand-fashioned woodwork.

Kohler, who in 1873 founded Kohler Co.

Sincere and generous, Marie Kohler took an untiring interest in the well-being of others, particularly the children and youth of her home community and her state.

Miss Kohler's long years of service to her community began soon after she completed her education at the University of Wisconsin. As a student there she developed a deep love of art, music and literature and an ability for writing, in which she was unusually gifted.

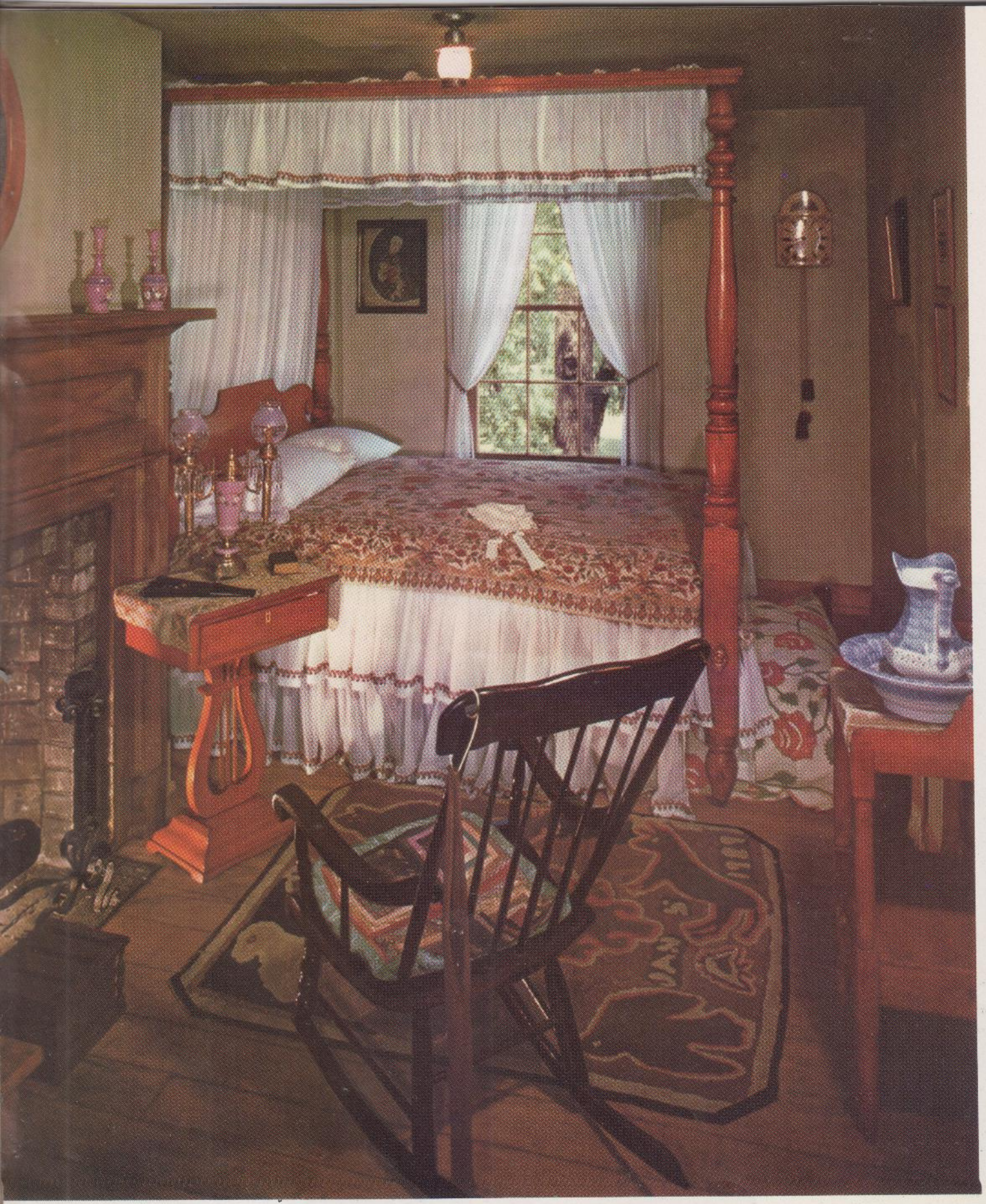
Of the many worthwhile public undertakings she completed, one of the most significant was the enactment of a new Children's Code bill by the 1929 Wisconsin legislature. A much needed reform, the Children's Code brought better care for delinquent, neglected and dependent children.

The new code had been formulated by a special committee working closely with the Conference of Social Work, of which Miss Kohler was president.

She was a devoted and unusually active member of Grace Episcopal Church of Sheboygan.

Trillium

A gem of the restoration is the massive butternut woodwork of Charles Robinson's Butternut House, here shown in ils beautiful detail in the parlor.



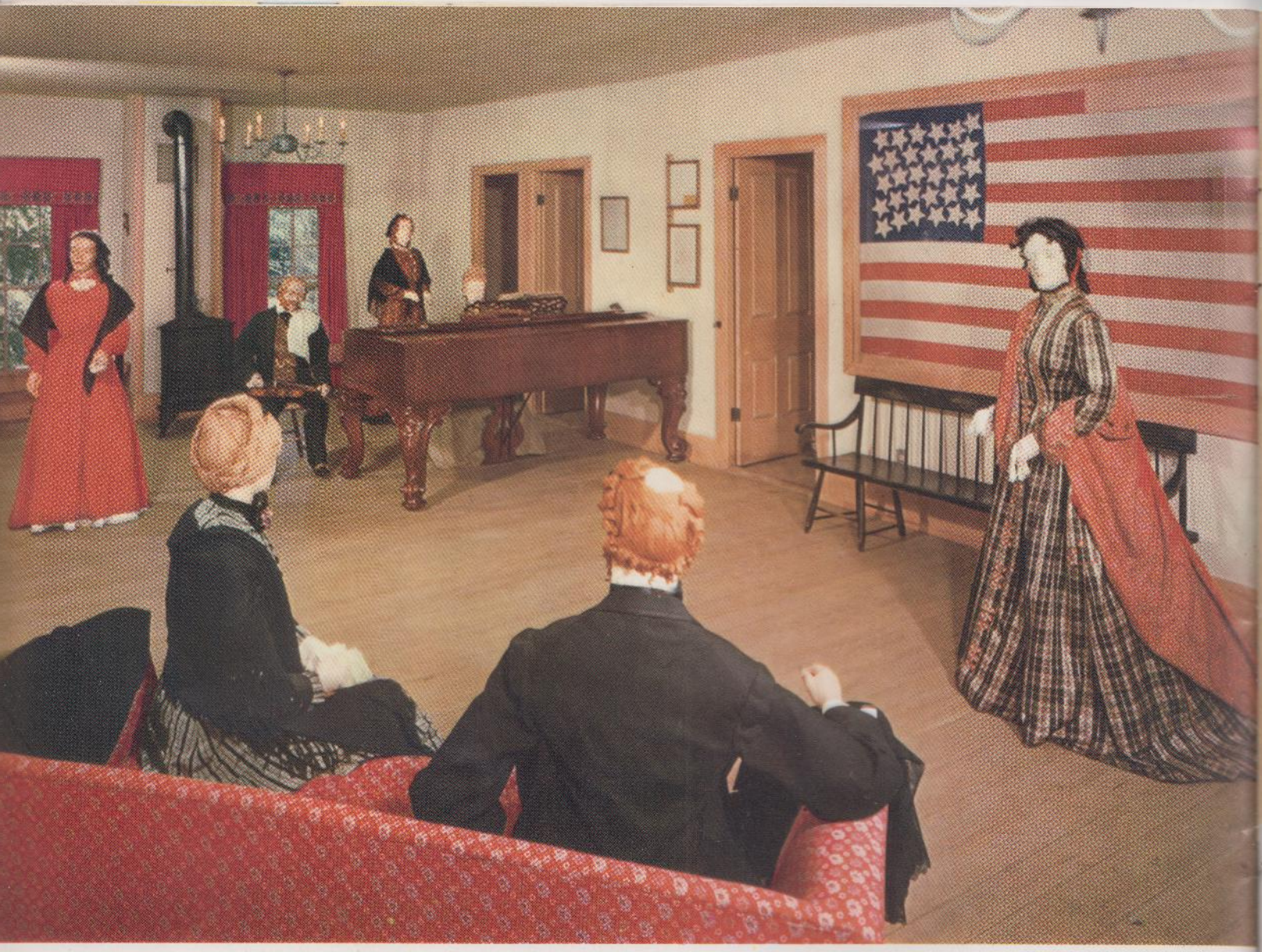
Territorial bedroom furnishings were given to Mrs. Kohler for Wade House. Wisconsin's second native white child was born in this bed.

Marie Kohler's philanthropies were many. Most of her estate was left to the Kohler Foundation, which she had helped to incorporate with her sisters, Evangeline and Lillie, her brother Herbert V. Kohler, and O. A. Kroos. Marie Kohler was the first president of the foundation, the purpose of which was to receive and administer funds for public benefit.

Ruth De Young Kohler, her sister-in-law, was born in Harvey, Illinois, the daughter of the late Frederic Robert and Miriam Cornell De Young. Her father was a chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court.

She was graduated from Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1928, as an honor student and history major and member of Phi Beta Kappa, na-

Most of the furnishings of inn's green parlor are from Wade House collection and were carefully restored by Mrs. Kohler. Green and ivory wallpaper of 1845 origin was located at Oswego, N. Y.



Rosewood piano and other ballroom furnishings are of period when Wade House was famous hostelry and community center. Flag was sewed in Greenbush when Wisconsin attained statehood.

tional honorary scholastic society.

After completing graduate study at the Sorbonne and at the University of London, she joined the editorial staff of the Chicago Tribune, which she served as woman's editor.

In that position, she won acclaim for her success in conducting the annual Woman's Congress, a forum that presented leaders of national and world importance.

After her marriage, she continued to write a regular column for the Tribune, and she conducted a weekly network radio program, "Women World Wide," for Mutual Broadcasting System.

To those who knew Mrs. Kohler —and her acquaintanceship was indeed broad—she was ever gracious, friendly, and sympathetically understanding of the aspirations of all persons.

She had an inquiring mind and an unusual wisdom that were effectively applied to whatever task called for her attention. Her intellectual enthusiasms were many, and devotion to worthy undertakings came as a duty.

Through her efforts, scores of famous political leaders, artists, writers, commentators and actors were brought to the stages of the Waelderhaus and Recreation Hall, in Kohler Village, to make the Distinguished Guest Series of the Woman's Club an outstanding contribution to the cultural life of the community.

Richard Philipp, F.A.I.A.

Restored Wade House was termed an "unique landmark" of Wisconsin's frontier era by the American Institute of Architects in a special citation honoring the late Mrs. Ruth De Young Kohler for her planning and direction of the project.

The award, for distinguished achievement in architecture, was granted at the Institute's 1955 national convention at Minneapolis.

Presented to Herbert V. Kohler, as chairman of the Kohler Foundation, by Clair W. Ditchy, institute president, the citation paid special tribute to the "inspiration and indomitable energy" of Mrs. Kohler which made it possible to complete the Wade House project in all of its authentic details.

In the Old Wade House State Park restoration, the citation pointed out, "there has been recreated a welcome reminder of the ingenuity, the preseverance and the craving for beauty that marked those who conquered a wilderness for our people and for those to come after us."

To name just a few of the famous personages enlisted through her leadership, those who made public appearances in the Village included Mary Garden, opera singer; Admiral Richard E. Byrd; Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, theologian; Eva Le Gallienne, noted actress; Alec Templeton, pianist; Hedda Hopper, newspaper columnist; His Imperial Highness, Otto of Austria; Ileana, Princess of Roumania; Pearl Buck, author, and Joe E. Brown, comedian.

She was a director of the General Foundation of Women's Clubs. And in the Woman's Club's sponsorship of the Girl Scouts of the Village, she served for many years as commissioner of the Kohler Girl Scout Council.

Her deep interest in education was evidenced by membership on the Boards of Trustees of Lawrence College, the Westminster Choir College at Princeton, New Jersey, and the Layton School of Art in Milwaukee.

She was also a trustee of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In 1952, Ripon College awarded her the honorary degree of doctor of laws for her contributions to education.

Hepatica

Among her many other offices and activities, Mrs. Kohler was a member of the National Laymen's and Laywomen's Committee of the National Council of Churches and was the first woman to serve as the state's general chairman of Brotherhood Week. She also served on the Governor's Commission on Human Rights and on the state committee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

She was an active communi-

cant of Grace Episcopal Church, which she regularly attended with her family. One of the last trips she made away from home was to attend the consecration of the Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese, the Rt. Rev. William H. Brady, at St. Paul's Cathedral in Fond du Lac.

In the field of history she had made some of her greatest public contributions, including the active leadership she gave to the Wisconsin program for the restoration and marking of places of unusual historical interest.

She served as vice president as well as a curator of the State Historical Society, and she was the founder and first president of the Women's Auxiliary.

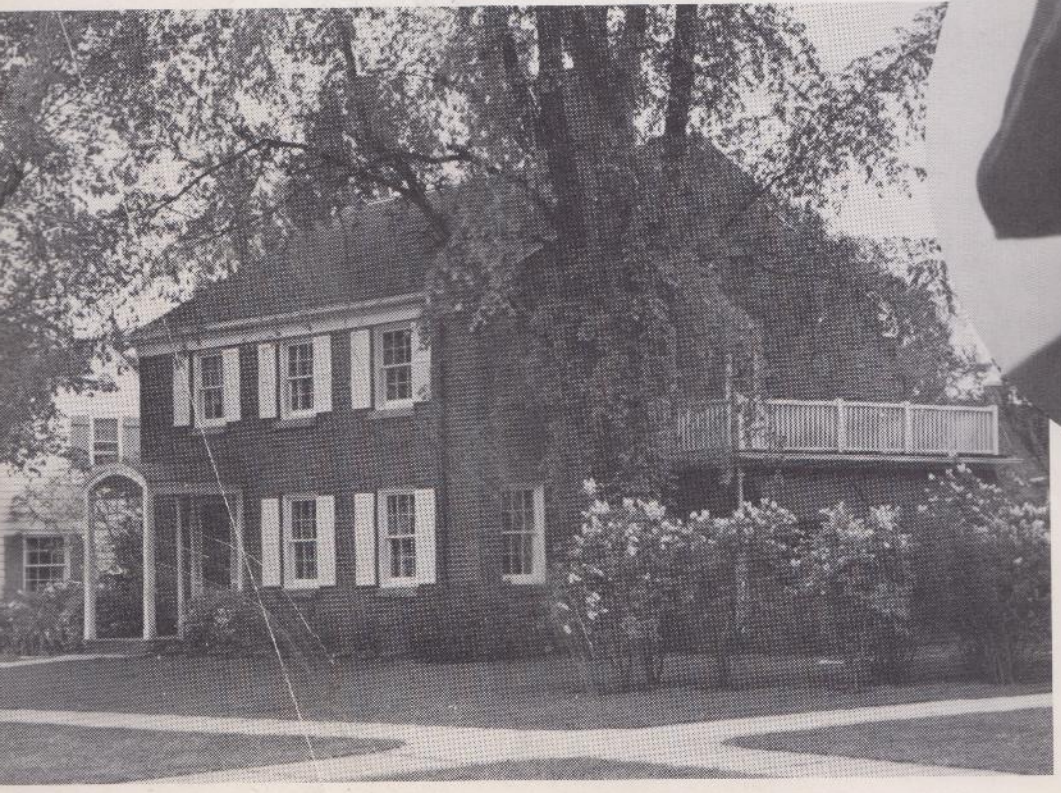
In conjunction with the important work she performed for the Wisconsin Centennial, she wrote and published two historical works in 1948 that were distributed at the Centennial Women's Building. They were "The Story of Wisconsin Women" and "Wisconsin's Historic Sites."

Further recognition was given her as an historian when she was appointed chairman for the State of Wisconsin representing the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The artistic excellence of the restoration as it was wrought by Mrs. Kohler has made it an inspiring memorial not only to Marie Christine Kohler but also to the men and women who were Wisconsin's pioneers of more than a century ago.

And without such intention on her part, Old Wade House State Park and the wealth of Americana preserved there can be regarded as a memorial to Ruth De Young Kohler herself.

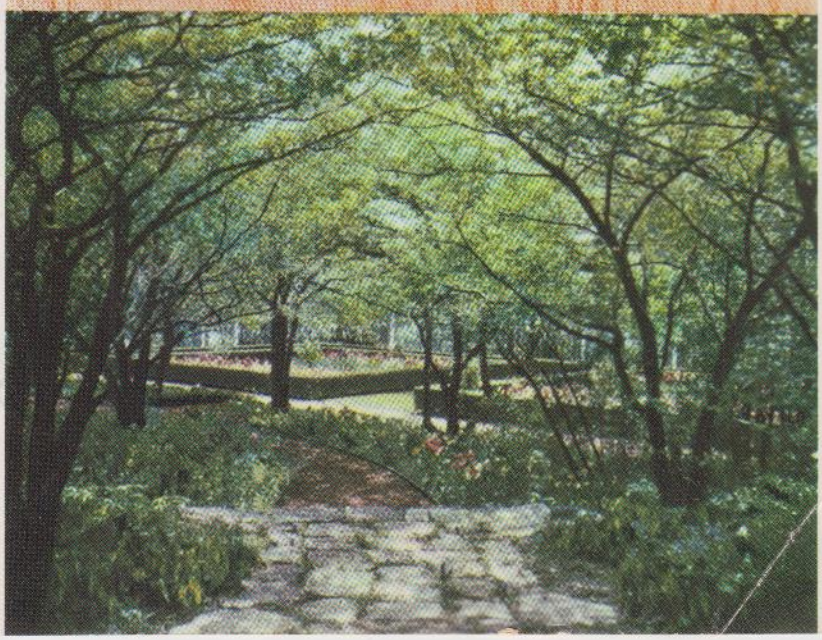
Architecture of Greenbush Methodist Church indicates it was designed by Charles Robinson, early-day builder. Built in 1855, church was damaged by fire in 1944.



A long-standing custom of Kohler Village begun by Marie Christine Kohler and carried forward by Ruth De Young Kohler is Better Homes Week sponsored by Kohler Woman's Club. Each year a Demonstration Home such as that shown is exhibited as example of the artistic possibilities in moderate-size homes.

One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.
—Dorothy Francis
Blomfield Gurney

Her gracious home in Kohler Village was one of Mrs. Kohler's commanding interests. She planned the beautifully-kept gardens that grace the family residence. Cutting garden, hawthorn mall and tanbark walk are particularly attractive features of the gardens.



ART DIRECTION BY CARL BRIESE
PRINTED BY THE LAKESIDE PRESS • R. R. DONNELLEY & SONS COMPANY, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS